hardly tell you that, in judging of a work like this, the direct return is by no means the only, or even the chief thing to be taken into consideration. There is a practically unanimous concensus of opinion on the part of all officers, both of the Revenue and Public Works departments, who have had to deal with the project, that the work will be valuable as a protective one. I take this opportunity to mention that, till the Kodayar works are completed, the policy of Government will be to restrict their other public works expenditure as much as possible to the maintenance of *existing* buildings and communications. Government are aware that the state of communications in North Travancore compares unfavourably with that in the South, but, in the present state of the public finances and with the Kodayar works on hand, it will not be possible to spend much on new works anywhere.

15. Railways.— The Railway from Shencottah to Quilon continued, I am sorry to say, to work at a loss. To make good the guaranteed interest on account of it, Government paid out of its revenues a sum of Rs. 2,42,525 during the year, as against Rs. 2,22,694 in the previous year.

Government are aware that there is a large volume of public opinion in favour of extending the railway both to the north as well as to the south. The question will receive careful consideration, but it may at once be said that the experience we have so far had of railway extensions on the west coast has not been quite favourable. The Shoranur-Cochin Railway, which was originally estimated to cost about 50 lakhs of rupees, cost the Cochin Darbar in the end about 68 lakhs, with the result that the net return on the outlay incurred is less than 3 per cent. per annum. Again, on account of the Shencottah-Quilon Railway, the Travancore Government is paying over 2 lakhs of rupees per annum to make good the guaranteed interest of that line. You are aware that our financial condition is not quite what it should be. We have had recurring deficits for a series of years. The Kodayar Project would still require about 15 lakhs according to the latest information before us; and from past experience Government would not at all be surprised if this figure is considerably exceeded. In view to all these circumstances, Government are of opinion that no fresh financial liability should be undertaken except after very careful enquiry. Government sympathise with the wish so generally expressed for railway extension and they recognise that the indirect advantages of opening the country must also be taken into consideration in addition to the direct return which a new line may give on the capital expended in constructing it. The matter will receive careful consideration and enquiries will be made and information collected to enable Government to judge of the feasibility in the first instance of connecting Trivandrum with the Shencottah-Quilon line at some suitable station. But it must be distinctly understood that no action will be taken unless Government feel reasonably certain that the proposed line will pay.

16. Anchal.— The total number of anchal offices rose from 150 to 157, and the total number of communications carried, from about 56 lakhs to nearly 64 lakhs. Money-order business was done at 97 of the anchal offices and the amount transmitted exceeded 11 lakhs of rupees. The value payable system was for the first time introduced during the year.

17. Devaswoms and Oottupuras.— The total expenditure on account of religious institutions during the year was Rs. 9,01,779 as against Rs. 7,16,047 in

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